

High school athletics can be valuable

Lynne Cohn is a sophomore at North Farmington High School

By Lynne Cohn
special writer

Japanese teenagers attend school six days a week, only to study academic subjects. There are no school sports, no cheerleaders, no Booster Club, no physical education classes. Rather, they do all these extra activities on their own time. Could this method work in Michigan?

David Finney, department head of history, said North Farmington High School "does not need athletics. We are a very academic school. However, sports keep many kids in school."

Norman Dickson, assistant principal, said he feels the same way. However, if we are to have athletics, it is better to have more. For example, North Farmington has a freshman, junior varsity and varsity football team. This gives lots of students a chance to play, he said.

"If we are to have sports," he said, "I think all the sports need the Booster Club to back them up, and the students to cheer them on, instead of just noticing boys basketball and football. Everyone and every sport needs to be equal."

Christine Hosman, teacher of first- and third-year French, said she feels sports add spirit and fun to North. She said she believes upper-

classmen need to make freshmen feel more comfortable and included. It is definitely a competitive atmosphere, but that can be very healthy.

THE STUDENTS, obviously, love the part that the athletic program at North plays. Halls and lockers are always colorfully decorated with brown and gold "Go North!" posters, which live up to the atmosphere. At this point, North is definitely not aiming toward downplaying sports programs. All academic high schools will do much better in Japan. Sports are one of the best things at North. Go Raiders!!

One of the major concerns for students and teachers alike at North is the graduation requirements. Along with this, of course, comes curriculum.

In order to graduate, a student must complete two semesters of physical education, one semester of health and swimming, 5.5 semesters of history, six semesters of English, two semesters of science (although this changed for the class of 1990 onward to two years) and four semesters of math. Let's see what the people involved had to say about this.

Surprisingly, the majority of students, plus the faculty and administration interviewed, agreed that North's graduation requirements are

at the minimum. They feel more of everything could definitely be added.

ONE REQUIREMENT that was slightly controversial was physical education. Students felt that if gym was required, it should be offered as a pass/fail class. That would give less able-bodied students a chance to pass the class without affecting their grade point average.

Some students felt that gym should not be required, but as everyone can always use exercise, this thought did not go over well. However, the major concern at North is that the gym classes are graded on ability rather than effort.

Liz Greenberg, sophomore, brought up a good point that since mathematics classes are offered as fundamental, regular and advanced, so should gym — if it isn't offered pass/fail — because "some students just do not excel in sports."

Also agreed upon was the idea that a swimming competency test should be offered on the first day of swimming to see who really knows how to swim. Then, those students could benefit more in a lifesaving type of class.

Dr. Dickson, assistant principal, said, "the only problem with this is that North is a small school, with only one specialized swimming teacher, Irv Horwitz. If such a class were to be added to our curriculum,

we would need to hire another teacher, which we cannot do."

In the math department, the students were not satisfied. Helene Bordman, junior, said, "This is my second year with the same teacher. I don't think this is very good because I only learn one person's ideas, habits and ways."

MRS. HOSMAN, teacher of first- and third-year French, said with the math requirement, part of it should include some sort of computer course. Other than that, most students just hang in there.

One favorite among the students is language. They all agreed that at least one year of a language should be required. Also, the students felt that AP French and Spanish should be offered to those students who do exceptionally well.

Mrs. Hosman clarified this by saying, "We are trying to incorporate AP French and Spanish for next year due to the fact that incoming freshmen may already have had one year of either language."

The one department that everyone loves is the history department. The reason for this is that history teachers enjoy what they teach. Mr. Finney, department head, "Students benefit from good teachers who enjoy what they teach. I try to give every history teacher at least one class that they love."

The English department is phenomenal at North. Bill Nusschauer, senior, reports, "I really think AP English is excellent. I loved British Lit."

Students take more English classes at North than any other class. However, they still wish for more time to take more classes.

WHICH BRINGS us to the popular idea of a seven-hour school day instead of six. The faculty and administration strongly support this idea. Most of the students agree. The seven-hour day would give more options and less classroom time. "How many times can you drill the verb avoir?" said Mrs. Hosman.

North also has a wide range of

electives. Each student has special interests, and if enough students wanted a new class, it would be done. This was done with the psychology course just a few years ago.

The one comment about any addition to North's curriculum was from Dr. Dickson. He said, "The schools need to offer everything classical because kids are surrounded by everything modern. Things in danger of extinction need to be kept alive in the schools."

Over-all, students and faculty alike are extremely satisfied with North Farmington academically. There are many strong student-teacher relationships because the students want to learn, and they reach out to the teachers.

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